

Editorial

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The research concerns of a museum are many and varied, from the historiography of the museum's own collections, and the context of their use, to the preservation and care of artefacts and their interpretation for a diverse audience. Museum research not only reflects the collections and interests of the organisation, it also exposes changing societal concerns and the pressures placed on museums. Thus museum research gathers knowledge for the benefit of museum displays and audiences, whilst providing a lens through which we can reflect on the role museums play for us, how they communicate what is important to us, and the social values they might promote in the future.

The research in this edition of the *Science Museum Group Journal* reflects this variety of interests, highlighting the wide range of enquiry encompassed by the broader Science Museum Group community. This edition of the *Science Museum Group Journal* includes work from one of our PhD students on the conservation of doped fabric-covered aircraft, a commentary on current debates in science communication, and a reflection on the historiography of a core audience-facing Science Museum staff role – the explainer or demonstrator. The latter discussion could not come at a more appropriate time, as we recently opened our new interactive gallery, *Wonderlab: The Statoil Gallery*, filled with explainers and the bold goal to welcome over 200,000 school children every year.

Just as the Science Museum Group has a continued commitment to create the world's foremost assemblage of the material culture of science and technology, so our future research commitment invites a broad and international community of museum professionals, university scholars and students to collaborate with us to build research activity, open up creativity and broaden knowledge across sciences, arts and the humanities. As Head of Collections at the Science Museum, it is my ambition that we continue to grow our research programme, building on a duty and a passion to explore the way that scientific practice and artefacts are embedded in our history and culture.

Tilly Blyth, Head of Collections

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- [Exhibitions](#)
- [Research in museums](#)

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